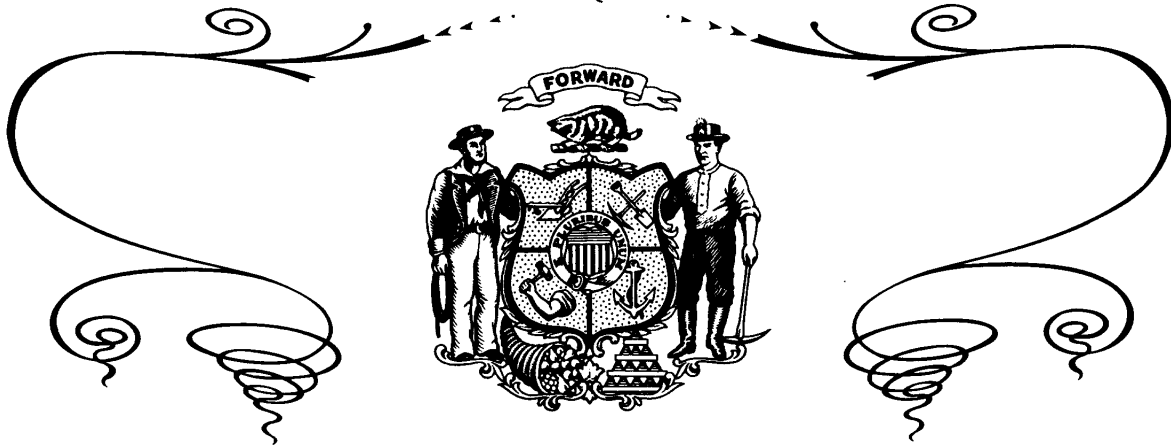


State of Wisconsin



2009 Senate Joint Resolution 52

ENROLLED JOINT RESOLUTION

Relating to: the life and public service of Ernest Paul Sobotta.

Whereas, Ernest P. Sobotta, lifelong resident of Independence, Wisconsin, died October 8, 2009, at the age of 93; and

Whereas, Ernest was born January 9, 1916, and served the city of Independence, Trempealeau County, the state of Wisconsin, and his country for his entire life; and

Whereas, Ernest served in the National Guard and with the U.S. Army in the African and European theaters of WWII and was a proud member and commander of American Legion Post 186; and

Whereas, Ernest was a pioneer in the telephone industry: he began his career as a lineman for the REA during the Great Depression, became the general manager of the Independence Telephone Company, and was one of the founders, and served as general manager, of the Tri-County Telephone Cooperative for Trempealeau, Buffalo, and Jackson counties, which was the first telephone company in the nation to offer exclusively private line service; and

Whereas, Ernest served as president and board officer of the Wisconsin State Telecommunications Association and was voted to its hall of fame for a lifetime of service and leadership, and he received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Telephone Cooperative Association for his pioneering work in the industry; and

Whereas, Ernest was a founder and officer of Western Wisconsin Communications Cooperative, the first organization in the nation to offer cable communications in a rural area; and

Whereas, he worked with the Kellogg Foundation, local rural electrification and telecommunications leaders, the University of Wisconsin System, local schools and businesses, and members of Congress and the Wisconsin legislature as a cofounder of Project Circuit/the Western Wisconsin School Consortium, a first-in-the-nation landmark education project linking five rural

school systems through two-way telecommunications which allowed rural students a broader range of educational opportunities; and

Whereas, he served over ten years as a member of the Trempealeau County Board of Supervisors and served as the Trempealeau County civil defense officer, an alderman in the city of Independence, and the president of the Library Board; and

Whereas, Ernest served as a member of numerous community organizations, including the Lion's Club, the Elk Rod and Gun Club, and was a founder of the Independence High School Wrestling Booster Club; and

Whereas, Ernest was a longtime member of the Independence Volunteer Fire Department, a board member of the Grandview Nursing Home in Blair, and a board member of the Trempealeau County Parks and Recreation Department, and for many years he wound the clock in the Independence City Hall clock tower; and

Whereas, Ernest was an avid hunter and never missed an opening day of deer season, and he enjoyed his large garden, orchard, and apiary, as well as jewelry making with his wife; and

Whereas, Ernest loved adventure, travel, and high school sports and was an unwavering fan of the Chicago Cubs and his athletically accomplished grandchildren; and

Whereas, he was proud of his five children, who are all UW-Madison graduates, and especially proud of his 12 grandchildren; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the senate, the assembly concurring, That the legislature of the state of Wisconsin recognizes the dedication, commitment, and public service of Ernest P. Sobotta to his family and to the citizens of Independence, Trempealeau County, the state, and the nation and offers its sincere sympathies to Ernest's family upon his passing.

Representative Michael J. Sheridan
Speaker of the Assembly

Senator Fred A. Risser
President of the Senate

Date

Robert J. Marchant
Senate Chief Clerk